

**VIRGINIA INDEPENDENT
SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION
(VISA)**



**MANUAL
FOR
SCHOOL EVALUATION**

2016 EDITION

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I. INTRODUCTION

PREFACE:

The standards set forth in this manual for accrediting member schools of the Virginia Independent Schools Association (VISA) are directed toward the further strengthening of independent schools in Virginia. The directors of VISA are constantly aware of the responsibilities member schools have in providing excellence in educational opportunities. The directors believe that the implementation of these standards will provide a foundation for a strong educational program for students enrolled in member schools.

Planning for improvement must be continuous. New directions in educational philosophy or objectives must be justified by changes in circumstances, student personnel, community interests or other fundamental factors governing the program of the school.

Each school seeking accreditation by VISA shall file with the accreditation committee a clear statement setting forth its educational philosophy and aims.

The accrediting process of VISA has been approved by the Virginia Council for Private Education (VCPE). Member schools are to reflect the philosophy and objectives of the standards set by VISA. These standards went into effect September 2000 and have been revised in 2005, 2011, and again in 2016.

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

The Virginia Independent Schools Association does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic, national, or religious origin.

MISSION/PHILOSOPHY

The purposes of this Association are:

1. To promote educational excellence among member schools.
2. To encourage a commitment to high standards in the academic, student life, and all areas of member schools.
3. To establish and maintain a respected independent school accreditation system for member schools.

4. To promote a spirit of cooperation among member schools, other independent schools, public schools, and Virginia Council for Private Education (VCPE).
5. To promote any and all things necessary and incidental thereto for the maintenance of superior educational opportunities among member schools.
6. To comply with VCPE constitutional by-laws.

THE HISTORY OF VISA:

The Virginia Independent Schools Association (VISA) has been a charter member of the Virginia Council for Private Education (VCPE) since 1974. VISA was founded in 1969 by schools from all regions of Virginia. In 1987 oversight of accreditation was moved from the state board of education to VCPE and VISA was a recognized organization for accreditation by VCPE. Each member school has a representative that serves as a director on the VISA Board of Directors. These directors are charged with the task of developing standards that member schools must follow, which provide a foundation for a strong educational program for students enrolled in member schools.

THE HISTORY OF VCPE:

The Virginia Council for Private Education (VCPE) was organized in 1974 as the Virginia affiliate of the National Council for American Private Education (CAPE), which has headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Twelve different associations currently comprise the VCPE membership and each of these represents preschool, elementary, and/or secondary academic institutions. All VCPE members must be non-profit and have a racially nondiscriminatory membership policy.

The Council, while recognizing and encouraging a diversity of beliefs, a variety of education philosophies, and the independence of each member association, strives to represent and speak on educational issues of common concern and interest. The Council is committed to the preservation of pluralism in American education and to the right of parents to choose an education appropriate for their children. To ensure and promote the vitality that freedom of choice allows, the Council

makes known to the public the aims and goals to which its member organizations jointly subscribe.

VCPE monitors legislation affecting private schools. VCPE is available to members of the legislature, to the Board of Education, and to the Department of Education to furnish information about and to articulate the private school viewpoint on educational matters relating to the private sector. It also serves as a vehicle through which the public school viewpoint may be conveyed to the nonpublic school constituency.

Many private schools in Virginia believe it is desirable to seek accreditation as a means of strengthening their programs and facilities and assuring the public that the published purpose and philosophy of a school are being fulfilled. On April 25, 1985, the Virginia Board of Education transferred the accrediting process for nonpublic schools to the VCPE Commission on Accreditation. The Commission on Accreditation was created by VCPE for the purpose of approving appropriate accreditation processes for nonpublic schools in order to secure recognition for these schools by the Virginia Department of Education. During the process, an association submits its accrediting standards to VCPE for review and approval. Upon approval, the accrediting association administers its own accrediting process for the schools in the association.

The VCPE Commission on Accreditation would convene and be comprised of only representatives from approved accrediting associations. The original purposes for the Commission on Accreditation were to assist in the sustained and enhanced quality of elementary and secondary education among nonpublic schools of Virginia; to coordinate efforts within the nonpublic school community in the Commonwealth of Virginia in order to maintain nonpublic schools as a viable and responsible educational alternative; to provide guidance to member organizations in the process of self-evaluation; to ensure that member associations establish and maintain in their schools general policies and standards policies and standards for excellence; to review and approve accreditation processes used by member associations; to verify the certification of accreditation or candidacy status; to review annual reports to the Commission on Accreditation of regular and affiliate members of VCPE which demonstrate adherence to policies and standards of the Commission on Accreditation; to review petitions and appeals from accrediting agencies and member associations about programs of

evaluation; to ensure that the accreditation agency provides for the safekeeping of student permanent records; provide for communication between the Department of Education Liaison for Nonpublic schools and members of VCPE by identifying a Liaison from each VCPE member organization. When dealing with other issues, the full body of VCPE would convene. On November 30, 1998, the commission on Accreditation and VCPE legally became the entity.

VCPE's accrediting process became effective April 25, 1985, on a 2-year trial basis and was given full approval by the Virginia Board of Education on July 1, 1987. Since that date nonpublic schools have not used the state's accreditation process. In November of 1993, the Virginia Board of Education reconfirmed its relationship with VCPE in the form of a resolution. The 2000 General Assembly passed language to affirm this arrangement in Virginia's Code (See 100.4). The Virginia Department of Education provides a link to the VCPE website for those searching the web for further information about private education in Virginia; the Department's website is <http://www.pen.k12.va.us>

Virginia Council for Private Education
1901 Huguenot Road, Suite 301
Richmond, VA 23235
Website: www.vcpe.org
Phone: (804) 423-6435 FAX: (804) 423-6436

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP
Part 1.

Date: _____

Name of School: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

FAX: _____

Name of Foundation (if different): _____

Date of Founding: _____ Date of Incorporation: _____

Officers (name and address): Telephone:

President _____

Vice-President _____

Secretary _____

Treasurer _____

Number of Directors: _____ Executive Committee _____

Grades Included (Circle) PS K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 PG

Enrollment by Grades	KG	Grades 1-7	Grades 8-12	Total
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Current Year:	_____	_____	_____	_____
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Last Year:	_____	_____	_____	_____
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3 Years Ago:	_____	_____	_____	_____
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Total Cost	Tuition	Transportation	Total
Current Year:	_____	_____	_____
Last Year:	_____	_____	_____
3 Years Ago:	_____	_____	_____

Please explain other charges: _____

Secondary School Accreditation History:

Current Accreditations	This Year (check)	No. of Years
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Elementary School Accreditation History:

Current Accreditations	This Year (check)	No. of Years
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

School Head: _____

Board Chairman: _____

Signature of School Head: _____

Signature of Board Chair: _____

**The Virginia Independent Schools Association
Application for Membership
Part 2.**

Please attach the following to this application form:

1. Brief history of the school.
2. Statement of the school's philosophy and objectives.
3. School's stated admission policy as published and copy of the school's IRS letter of determination indicating 501 (C) (3) status.
4. Copy of school catalog or course descriptions.
5. Copy of most recent financial statements, preferably the audit from previous year including the management letter.
6. Copy of the current year budget.
7. List of professional staff and credentials.

Kindly return this form with attachments and Application Fee of \$300.00 to:

Joseph Whitley, Executive Director
Virginia Independent Schools Association
Isle of Wight Academy
P.O. Box 105
Isle of Wight, VA 23397

Telephone: (757) 357-3866
FAX: (757) 357-6886

**VIRGINIA INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION
DUES AND FEE STRUCTURE**

1. **APPLICATION FEE** (non-refundable): \$300.00
2. Accredited schools pay full annual membership dues:

FORMULA

The Dues Formula effective July 1, 1995 is as follows:

1. \$2.00 charge per student.
2. a minimum of \$200.00
a maximum of \$700.00

*Dues are subject to change as determined by the VISA Executive Board

II. MEMBERSHIP

PROCESS:

1. Schools applying for membership must complete application packet and submit to Executive Secretary.
2. Schools must submit evidence of following preliminary criteria:
 - a. Brief history of the school.
 - b. Statement of the school's philosophy and objectives.
 - c. School's stated admission policy as published and copy of school's IRS letter of determination indicating 501 (c) (3) status.
 - d. Copy of school catalog or course descriptions.
 - e. Copy of most recent financial statements preferable the audit from previous year including the management letter.
 - f. Copy of the current year budget.
 - g. List of professional staff and credentials.
3. The Executive Secretary and Head of applying school will arrange for on site visit from membership committee. The purpose of this visit is to tour the school, to conduct a mutual exchange of information, and determine if the process should continue.
4. Membership committee recommendation is presented to the Board.
5. Board takes action on committee's recommendation.
6. If accepted for membership, school begins self-study.
7. Visiting committee is appointed by Executive Secretary ensuring there is no conflict of interest.
8. On-site visit by Visiting Team is arranged.
9. Visiting committee reports and makes recommendation to membership committee.

10. Membership committee presents recommendation to full board.

11. Board takes action on recommendation.

12. Accreditation will be granted after approval by a majority vote of a quorum of Directors.

The average time for a school seeking accreditation is approximately two years from the date of application.

CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP:

Member (non-voting)

A member school has applied for and been accepted for membership in the Association. Membership is temporary status and does not constitute accreditation.

Accredited (voting)

Accredited schools have completed the self-study, evaluation visit, and have been approved by the Virginia Independent Schools Association Board of Directors.

Conditional Accreditation

A previously accredited school that fails to maintain compliance with the VISA standards of membership shall be assigned conditional accreditation. Non-compliance issues must be addressed in a period of time as determined by the Board of Directors.

APPEALS PROCESS:

Any school receiving unfavorable ruling on membership, accreditation, or conditional accreditation has the right to appeal this decision.

1. Appeals must be in writing to the Executive Secretary and must be received at least 30 days prior to the next VISA Board meeting.
2. A school may request its representative appear before the board.
3. The decision of the Board of Directors after the appeal has been presented is final.
4. A school may re-apply after a period of time at the discretion of the Board.

III. SCHOOL EVALUATION PROCEDURES

VISA STANDARDS:

Each school to be accredited by VISA must undergo a thorough self-study followed by a VISA evaluation visit. Recommendations of the visiting committee's report will be initiated by the school. These evaluations must be undertaken every five (5) years.

The following five-year time schedule shall be observed by each member school.

Year 1: The school uses the *VISA Manual for School Evaluation* or a comparable evaluative instrument published by SACS/CASI (AdvancEd), SAIS, or a VCPE accredited association.

Year 2: Visitation by Visiting Committee assigned by VISA to determine accreditation.

Year 6: Cycle Repeats but school must include information outlining steps taken by the school in reacting to recommendations made by the Self-Study and Visiting Team Evaluations. An explanation must accompany the report for each recommendation not accomplished including plans to develop such recommendations before the next visit.

SELF-STUDY PROCEDURES:

1. Prior to the start of a self-study, representatives of VISA will visit the school, meet with the Head of School, Board Members, and the Steering Committee Chairman.
2. The school must contact the VISA Executive Secretary to plan the evaluation and set a time-table of events. The Executive Secretary and Membership Director select the Visiting Committee Chairman and a minimum of three additional members. These are selected on the basis that there is no conflict of interest. The visitation is scheduled at a date convenient to the school.
3. The School's Self-Study Committee is comprised of the Steering Committee Chairman and a minimum of four team members. All

faculty and administrative staff should be appointed to one or more sub-committees to assure maximum participation and representation.

4. The Self-Study Committee selects or designs a constituent opinion poll and oversees its administration. The polls should address each of the areas of the self-study. All opinion polls need to be administered within the first 30 days of the self-study procedure.
5. The Self-Study Committee develops a schedule in carrying out the self-study, reviews sub-committee reports, and presents the draft of the final report to the entire faculty for evaluation and approval.
6. The Self-Study Committee publishes the self-study report and forwards a copy to each member of the Visiting Committee, VISA Membership Director and VISA Executive Secretary at least 30 days prior to the Visiting Committee's visit.
7. The VISA Executive Secretary, Membership Director, and Visiting Committee work with the school's Steering Committee Chairman to finalize plans and arrangements for the Visiting Committee. The Executive Secretary will go to the school during the visitation to observe the committee's work.
8. The school provides a room to serve as headquarters for the Visiting Committee. The following equipment and materials must be available.
 - a. Paper, pencils, computers, and copy machine
 - b. Adequate copies of curriculum materials
 - c. One complete copy of the Self-Study and several copies of each sub-committee report
 - d. Supplementary materials such as school publications, report cards, handbooks, and others
 - e. Supportive documentation that is labeled and stored in a user friendly format (file box).
9. The school makes arrangements for parking, secretarial assistance, hotel and eating accommodations.
10. The school is responsible for the reproduction and distribution of the final Visiting Committee Report.

VISITING COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES:

The responsibility of the Visiting Committee is a positive one. Its role is to evaluate the school according to its philosophy and VISA Standards and offer observations and recommendations for the improvement of the school. The committee determines the school's present status and provides a basis for further school improvement.

1. Personnel:

The Visiting Committee consists of a Chairman and sufficient members to carry out the work of the committee efficiently. Members may include Heads of School, teachers, and others involved in the field of education. The Committee should include individuals with particular expertise in each sub-sections of the self-study. Members should not be selected who have taught in the school being evaluated or have a conflict of interest.

2. Responsibilities of the Chairman and the Committee:

- a. The Chairman visits the school prior to the visit to determine the status of the self-study, tours the school, and makes arrangements for the committee.
- b. The Chairman and the committee members are required to receive training provided by VISA.
- c. Committee members are expected to be present for the entire evaluation visit.
- d. The committee members are responsible to read the entire Self-Study Report prior to the visit.
- e. The committee should meet the day before or morning of the visit to discuss general information pertaining to the school. Committee members should be assigned to work in one or more sub-sections of the Self-Study. The sub-sections chairman writes the report for the section, signs it, and presents to the Visiting Committee Chairman for review.

3. Suggested Visiting Committee Schedule:

Day 1 –

- Arrival 4:00 p.m.
- Dinner with representatives of the school
- Possible tour of school
- Organizational meeting to discuss responsibilities

Day 2 –

- Breakfast with the entire school faculty to introduce visiting committee
- Meet with administration and central office contact person
- Meet with self-study team
- Meet with subcommittees
- Observations
- In the evening, begin team consensus and writing

Day 3 –

- Observations
- Follow-up interviews
- Meet with students
- Meet with Board Members
- Meet with parents
- Writing report

Day 4 –

- Finish report
- Chairman presents oral report to representatives of school

4. During the visit, the Chairman shall:

- a. Be available to meet with individual committee members in order to clarify and coordinate their work.
- b. Hold meetings at the end of each day to review the information that has been gathered and begin the preparation of the report.
- c. Conduct and record session when the Visiting Committee votes on school compliance with each VISA Standard.
- d. Present a general overview of the committee's findings to the representative of the school. The Visiting Committee overview and report does not address the question of approval or accreditation, which is the recommending prerogative of VISA Membership Committee.
- e. Submit at the end of the visit the expense vouchers for the chairman and for each committee member and ask the school to make payment directly to each member in accordance with the Association's current schedule of reimbursement.

5. Within two weeks of the visit, the Chairman of the Visiting Committee prepares the final Visiting Committee Report (signed) and submits it to the VISA Membership Committee. Although each member prepares a report on the aspects of the school which are assigned, the chairman is responsible for the overall editing and for the conclusions reached. The final Visiting Committee Report provides a succinct description of the school, of the self-study, the evaluation process as an introduction, makes comments and recommendations on each section and area of the school, and presents a summary page of conclusions about the school.

IV. DUAL ACCREDITATION

Schools that seek dual accreditation from VISA and AdvancEd, SAIS or agencies recognized by VCPE must coordinate all facets of the process through all offices. The school prepares a single self-study report that addresses the standards of both accrediting agencies. The timetable for the self-study process and date of the evaluation visit must be coordinated between the accrediting agencies and the Head of School. The Chair of the Visiting Committee and the composition of the Visiting Committee are determined by the VISA Executive Secretary in consultation with the other accrediting agency. Following the review of the school by the governing bodies of both associations, the recommendations regarding accreditation are forwarded to each association. If the school uses an alternative self-study model, the school should create a Narrative Document that minimally responds to each of the major sections of the VISA Evaluation Manual with a brief, two to three page summary in reference to each of the standards listed in each section.

V. VISA STANDARDS FOR MEMBERSHIP

I. THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY

VISA STANDARDS:

1. The school has admission policies one of which must include a statement that qualified students are admitted without regard to race, color, ethnic background, or national origin.
2. Written information is made available to students/parents pertaining to policies, obligations, and financial responsibilities prior to enrollment.
3. The school has been in existence for at least three years and has a program spanning at least three successive grades no lower than Kindergarten.

SELF-STUDY PROCEDURES:

The report should include:

- A. A description of parental involvement in the school and the effectiveness of parent-school communication.
- B. A description of the school's involvement in the local community.
- C. A climate of the school as determined from opinion surveys.
- D. A description of orientation program for new students.
- E. Identified areas of strength and concerns in the school and community.
- F. Description of addressing recommendations for previous Visiting Committee.

SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTATION:

- A. Results of opinion surveys.
- B. Admission brochures and policies and financial agreements.
- C. Current enrollment for present year and two previous years.
- D. Student/Parent Handbook.
- E. Enrollment by grades.
- F. School population by counties/cities.
- G. Withdrawals.
- H. Summary sheet of Standardized Tests for each class.
- I. Racial profile.

- J. Follow-up data, most recent graduating class, if applicable.
- K. Size of graduating class.
- L. Brief history of the school.

II. PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

VISA STANDARDS:

4. The school has a clear statement setting forth its educational philosophy and aims.
5. The school periodically reviews its philosophy and objectives.
6. The school community is informed of the school's philosophy and objectives.
7. The school is a legal entity and is tax exempt and not organized for profit.

SELF-STUDY PROCEDURES:

The report should include:

- A. A description of the school's philosophy and objectives and to whom the description is available.
- B. Procedures used in establishing the school's philosophy and objectives.
- C. The ways in which the philosophy and objectives of the school reflect characteristics of the community.
- D. An explanation of procedures used to update and review the philosophy and objectives.
- E. Identified areas of strength and concerns on the philosophy and objectives of the school.
- F. Description of addressing recommendations for previous Visiting Committee.

SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTATION:

- A. A copy of the school's IRS Tax Exempt 501(c)(3).
- B. A copy of the school's stated philosophy and objectives.

III. INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

VISA STANDARDS:

8. The school's educational program provides for a balanced program of instruction developed from its stated philosophy and objectives and in keeping with the abilities, interests, and educational needs of its students.
9. The school has a written curriculum guide describing its course of study and educational objectives at each level and in each area.
10. The school year shall include a minimum of 180 days or the equivalent thereof and the school day shall include a minimum of six clock hours.
11. The standard unit of credit for graduation shall be based on a minimum of 130 clock hours or the equivalent thereof of instruction.
12. Teachers of academic subjects have no more than 125 students enrolled in their classes.
13. The school provides the minimum course offerings based on established VISA requirements.
14. The summer school program, if offered, is equal in quality to that offered during the regular school term.
15. The school clearly defines minimum requirements for graduation.

SELF-STUDY PROCEDURES:

The report should include:

- A. An overview of the school curriculum that should include commentary on the following areas.
 1. Organizational pattern and curriculum design.
 2. Curriculum development procedures including faculty involvement.
 3. Provisions for providing balance, scope, and sequence.
 4. Provisions for curriculum design and evaluation compatibility.
 5. Curriculum strengths, weaknesses, and needs.

6. Extent to which the curriculum is consistent with the school's philosophy and objectives.
 7. Class load lists.
- B. The Self-Study Committee should appoint subcommittees in subject areas that are appropriate to the individual school. Each subcommittee provides a report featuring the following information.
1. A descriptive statement of its program's operations (policies, goals, staffing, and offerings) and the manner in which these operations support the overall purpose and objectives of the school. Include relevant data such as library materials, audio-visuals, etc. Each subcommittee should include in its commentary (but not restricted to) the following areas:
 - a. Specific learning objectives at each level and how the objectives are developed and assessed.
 - b. Indicate the degree to which objectives are being achieved.
 - c. Provisions for developing learning skills and critical thinking.
 - d. Provisions to meet the common and individual needs of the student.
 - e. Opportunities in the program for students to develop personally (initiative, integrity, responsibility, leadership, creativity).
 - f. Opportunities in the program for the student to deal with current issues and develop positive social attitudes (toward citizenship, self, work, and ethics).
 - g. Coordination of learning activities between levels and other instruction areas.
 - h. Procedures for assessing educational needs of individual pupils and for meeting special needs (e.g. gifted students, learning disabled).
 - i. Placement, grouping, and promotion of students within the group.
 - j. Reporting of progress and provisions for addressing poor student performance.

- C. A description of emerging, unique, and innovative elements of the program.
- D. A description of the use of community resources (human and material) in this instructional area.
- E. A discussion of the adequacy of:
 - 1. Teaching materials.
 - 2. Equipment.
 - 3. Facilities.
- F. A definition of the known strengths and needs in course content at each level.
- G. A list in order of priority of the short and long range improvements recommended for this learning area.
- H. Description of addressing recommendations for previous Visiting Committee.

SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTATION:

- A. Copies of curriculum guides.
- B. A syllabus for each course offered.
- C. Attach to this section a copy of the school calendar, daily instruction schedule, graduation requirements, minimum course offerings, and a sample of student report and permanent record forms.
- D. Standardized test scores.
- E. Summer program brochures.
- F. Textbook adoption schedule.

IV. ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTITUTION

VISA STANDARDS:

A. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

16. The institution is an independent school, is a legal entity organized not-for-profit, and is tax exempt.
17. The school has a governing body which functions under a set of written by-laws which guide the development of school policy.
18. The governing body has a system for the orientation and education of members newly appointed to the body regarding their role and responsibilities.
19. The governing body is responsible for establishing the annual budget and for maintaining the fiscal stability of the school.
20. The governing body is responsible for employing, evaluating, and supporting the designated individual or individuals whose chief responsibility is the administration and supervision of the school.
21. The governing body develops and regularly reviews the school's statement of philosophy.
22. The governing body is responsible for the periodic review of the school's policies, issues, and needs.
23. The membership of the governing body is organized to be independent of any special interest group and to be representative of the school's over-all constituency.

B. FINANCIAL

24. The financial resources are adequate to sustain the school programs in a manner consistent with the philosophies and objectives of the school.
25. The school uses appropriate procedures for managing financial resources and maintains records of receipts and disbursements of funds.

26. The financial records of the school are examined annually by a licensed professional accountant and a full opinion audit is required at least once every five years. Any applying school which has not had a full opinion audit within four years of the start of the self-study must have one completed during the self-study year.

SELF-STUDY PROCEDURES:

The report should include:

- A. A description of the board's organization, its function, and the process for implementation of board decisions and policies.
- B. A description of the process used to select new board members.
- C. A description of the board's orientation and education of new members.
- D. Copies of:
 - 1. Total expenses of annual operating budget (current year, one year ago, two years ago).
 - 2. Total income for annual operating budget (current year, one year ago, two years ago).
 - 3. Annual income from tuition.
 - 4. Value of physical plant.
 - 5. Capital outlay of indebtedness.
 - 6. Annual debt retirement.
- E. A description of annual fund raising activities.
- F. A description of the school's budgetary long-range plans.
- G. Identified areas of strength and concerns in the administration of the institution.
- H. Description of addressing recommendations from previous Visiting Committee.

SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTATION:

- A. Copy of current operating budget.
- B. Tuition rate schedule.
- C. Schedule of all fees not included in tuition.
- D. Financial structure.
- E. A summary of the school's most recent professional audit or a statement from the independent auditor reviewing the school's finances.
- F. Copy of capital budget.
- G. Articles of Incorporation.
- H. Board By-Laws.
- I. List of Board Members and relationship to school.

- J. Evidence of Board training and orientation.
- K. Enrollment contract.
- L. Copy of minutes from last two Board Meetings.

V. SCHOOL PERSONNEL

VISA STANDARDS:

27. The teaching faculty and administrative staff is sufficient in number to carry out the program of the school and provide for the needs of the school; service personnel is adequate to sustain support programs of the school. The school has an employment process that demonstrates that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic background, or national origin as provided by law.
28. As basic preparation, members of the professional staff should possess either a teaching license, a bachelor's degree or give satisfactory evidence of its equivalent in training or experience. Member schools are encouraged to require a teacher to hold a valid Virginia State Collegiate Professional Certificate. Professional staff are required to pursue continuing education course-work or professional development.
29. The school has a functioning program for evaluation of staff performance and for the further professional development of the staff.
30. The administrative staff is responsible for instructional leadership and effective school management that implements the school program policies established by the governing body.
31. Provision is made for the effective involvement of faculty, students, parents, and alumni in the development of the total school program.
32. The school maintains and safeguards complete and accurate records for staff, students, and graduates.

SELF-STUDY PROCENDURES:

This report should include:

- A. A description of the Head of School, education, experience, and tenure at the school.
- B. A description of the administrative structure of the school and its operating procedures.
- C. A description of administrative functions in providing leadership, supervision, community relations, professional growth of staff, program development, and responsible student performance.

- D. A description of the school's policy for maintaining and safeguarding complete and accurate records for staff, students, and graduates.
- E. A description of the provisions for involving faculty, students, parents, and alumni in the development of the total school program.
- F. A description of the factors within the system that are attractive to prospective teachers and enhance faculty morale.
- G. A description of methods of communication among administrators, faculty, and staff.
- H. Identified areas of strengths and concerns in the administration and faculty.
- I. A list in order of priority of the recommended procedures for improving the effectiveness of the administration and faculty.
- J. Description of addressing recommendations from previous Visiting Committee.

SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTATION:

- A. Listing of all staff positions and administrators, their experience, qualifications, and job descriptions.
- B. Faculty evaluation samples.
- C. Samples of newsletters, calendars, alumni correspondence, etc.
- D. Description of professional development programs.
- E. Background checks as required by law

VI. AUXILIARY SERVICES

VISA STANDARDS:

A. LEARNING MEDIA SERVICES

33. The library-learning collection is so organized, supplied, and staffed as to provide for the program of the school and the needs of the students and professional staff.
34. The individual in charge of learning media services possesses either a license or a bachelors degree (or give satisfactory evidence of its equivalent in training or experience).
35. Professional learning media staff members are qualified by training and experience in the area of library science and/or media services.
36. The school shall provide access to a book collection or the equivalent through electronic/technological resources.

B. GUIDANCE SERVICES

37. A well-defined guidance program is in operation at the school.
38. The counseling and advisory program of the school meets the needs of the students enrolled in terms of the school program and the stated purposes and objectives. The school has developed policies and procedures for the prevention and mitigation of bullying.
39. Professional staff members are qualified by training and experience in guidance and counseling.
40. Student records are complete, accurate, and safeguarded. In the event of a school closing, student records will be transferred to the nearest VISA school.

C. FOOD, HEALTH, AND TRANSPORTATION

41. The school has a written emergency management and disaster plan that ensures the safety and care of students and staff in the event of severe weather or natural or man-made disasters and has trained staff in such

measures.

42. The school's health facilities, vehicles, and food services meet state and local health, safety, and fire regulations.
43. Procedures are adequate to meet the health care needs of the student body. The school has developed policies and protocols for Medication Administration Training and assessment and management of concussions.
44. Service personnel are adequate to sustain the support programs in a manner consistent with the purposes and objectives of the school.

SELF-STUDY PROCEDURES:

This report should include:

A. LEARNING MEDIA SERVICES

- A. A description of the library collection indicating the number of volumes, number of periodicals, availability of vertical files, newspapers, and available seating.
- B. A description of availability of library collection to students, faculty, and community including the summer months.
- C. A description of the utilization of the library.
- D. A description of audio-visual equipment and services available to the school.
- E. Activities performed by media service personnel in providing educational experiences for students of the school.
- F. A description of the positions, professional and paraprofessional, involved with media services and their responsibilities.
- G. Identified procedures used in keeping media services current, making improvements, budgeting, and the discarding of outdated or unused items.
- H. A description of the areas of greatest strength in the learning media services.
- I. Identified areas in greatest need of strengthening and outline plans for improvement.
- J. Description of addressing recommendations for previous Visiting Committee.

B. GUIDANCE SERVICES

- K. A description of the guidance facilities available including equipment and materials.
- L. A description of the method of maintaining and safeguarding student and alumni records.
- M. A description of the school's testing program, the recording of testing results, and how testing information is made available to student, faculty, and parents.
- N. Indications of what efforts are made to involve all students in guidance services.
- O. Explanations of the program in use to provide counseling in personal problems and career choices.
- P. Identified areas of strength and concerns in guidance services
- Q. Description of addressing recommendations from previous Visiting Committee.

C. FOOD, HEALTH, AND TRANSPORTATION

- R. A description of the school's program of food services including assigned personnel, areas for eating, and length of lunch period.
- S. A description of the health service facilities and the school's procedure for handling student accidents and illnesses.
- T. Discussions of the instructional and supervisory activities of teachers that promote health and safety including nutrition, drug education, smoking, and other factors affecting student health.
- U. Indications of the type of information available to the school concerning student health and options for emergency treatment.
- V. A description of the transportation services provided by the school and indicate the percentage of students using school bus service and private transportation.
- W. Indications of the process used in the selection and training of bus drivers.
- X. A description of measures taken to maximize student safety on buses and private transportation.
- Y. A description of procedures used in transporting students for educational trips and extra-curricular activities.
- Z. Identified areas of strength and concerns in food, health, and transportation.
- AA. Description of addressing recommendations from Previous Committee.

SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTATION:

- A. Inventory of library and media service equipment.
- B. Sample of student record.
- C. Daily and annual schedule.
- D. Copy of transportation equipment.
- E. General routing of buses.
- F. Sample of medical forms, emergency cards, etc.
- G. First aid supplies and availability.
- H. Copy of the emergency management and disaster response plan.

VII. STUDENT ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

VISA STANDARDS:

45. School sponsored extracurricular activities are under the direct supervision of the staff.
46. The student activities program contribute to the educational objectives of the school.

SELF-STUDY PROCEDURES:

This report should include:

- A. A description of the ways in which student activities carry out the philosophy and objectives of the school.
- B. Indications of the percentage of students who participate in any organized student activities.
- C. A description of the place of school assemblies in the total program, frequency of assemblies, determination of assembly objectives, and how students participate in such programs.
- D. A description of how students participate in school government.
- E. Indications of safeguards implemented to discourage over participation in student activities and interference with academic program.
- F. Summarizations of funding procedures for each student activity.
- G. A description of the procedures used by the school in safeguarding the health and safety of students involved in extracurricular activities.
- H. Brief descriptions of methods of recognizing student achievement in school activities.
- I. Identified areas of strength and concerns in student activities programs.
- J. Description of addressing recommendations from previous Visiting Committee.

SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTATION:

- A. Provide lists of clubs and organizations sponsored by the school including the number of students participating and the faculty sponsors.
- B. Provide information about the inter-scholastic activities sponsored by the school including the number of students participating and faculty sponsors.

VIII. SCHOOL PLANT FACILITIES

VISA STANDARDS:

47. All school buildings provide ample space and appointments to serve their purpose.
48. The school has sufficient physical facilities and equipment to support the programs of the school and such facilities meet applicable state and local health, safety, and fire regulations.
49. The school provides grounds that are sufficient to accommodate the necessary outdoor activities of the student body other than athletic competition and such grounds are maintained in a safe and attractive manner.

SELF-STUDY PROCEDURES:

The report should include:

- B. A general description of the school buildings in view of adequacy, quality, and compatibility with the educational program and the school's philosophy and objectives.
- C. A discussion on the adequacy of the following specific areas in relation to the program it supports:
 1. Classrooms
 2. Laboratories
 3. Library
 4. Offices
 5. Assembly
 6. Food Service
 7. Physical Education
 8. Locker Rooms
 9. Other
- D. A description of the procedures and/or equipment available as safeguards against fire and other hazards.
- E. Identified areas of strength and concerns in school plant facilities.
- F. Descriptions of addressing recommendations from previous Visiting Committee.

SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTATION:

- A. School map of buildings and grounds
- B. Building floor plans
- C. Emergency plans for fire exits, etc.
- D. Plant inspection reports

- E. Contracted service agreements
- F. Maintenance provisions

IX. PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

VISA STANDARDS:

50. Preschool or day care programs are designed to meet the developmental, emotional, and intellectual needs of their students while providing a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment for ages 2 thru 5.
51. Preschool or day care programs subject to licensure must be licensed through the Department of Social Services or the State of Virginia.
52. Preschool or day care programs meet or exceed all minimum requirements for licensure through the Department of Social Services of the State of Virginia.

SELF-STUDY PROCEDURES:

The report should include:

- A. A descriptive statement of the program's operation (policies, goals, staffing, and offerings) that shows how this supports the overall purposes and objectives of the school.
- B. A list of procedures for admission.
- C. A description of the information distributed to parents regarding obligations, admission, policies, and program.
- D. A list of policies regarding program, hours and days of operation, discipline, transportation, health, food service and safety.
- E. Evidence of sufficient and trained personnel. Training involves first aid, emergency health care, as well as continued professional development.
- F. A copy of the curriculum guide designed to provide the age appropriate activities.
- G. Evidence of comprehensive individual student records.
- H. Description of facilities which allow for safe implementation of the program.
- I. Identified areas of strength and concerns in the preschool program.
- J. Description of addressing recommendations from previous Visiting Committee.

SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTATION:

- A. Copy of admission forms
- B. Floor plan
- C. Current enrollment
- D. Employee criminal records check, TB scan, and evidence of training

- E. Daily schedule
- F. Copy of current license and last inspection notice

X. EVALUATION PROCESS

VISA STANDARDS:

53. The school must have a continuous plan for school improvement. This Strategic Plan will result in logical, realistic, and sequential efforts to improve overall school program.
54. Evaluation of a school must be undertaken every five years.
55. Schools seeking accreditation or dual accreditation must meet each of the VISA membership standards.

SELF-STUDY PROCEDURES:

The report should include:

- A. Long Range Plan
- B. Request for Dual Accreditation if desired
- C. Identified areas of strength and concerns in the evaluation process.
- D. Descriptions of addressing recommendations for previous Visiting Committee.

SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTATION:

- A. Timeline for Accreditation
- B. Copy of previous five-year report
- C. Latest VISA Annual Report

VISA Subject Offerings

The subject offering of a VISA accredited school shall be adequate in scope for the student body of that particular school. Each school with any combination of grades Preschool, K-7 shall provide instruction in the following subjects:

Fine Arts	Physical Education
Health	Science & Technology
Language Arts	Social Studies
Mathematics	

In general, the secondary school must offer in grades 8-12 a minimum of 27 units in academic subjects plus other units in computer literacy, economics education, practical arts and fine arts as may be appropriate for the needs of the school. The need for practical arts and fine arts shall be determined by a choice of subjects survey made each year by the administrative or guidance officer in each school and shall be a matter of record. A school not offering any formal instruction in fine arts (music, music appreciation, graphic arts, or drama) shall be required to offer an informal program which may consist of instruction in art or music appreciation, a visiting lectures program, extra-curricular music activities, music (voice or instrumental), or combinations of these. In any case the program must be clearly defined and reported to the accrediting committee.

Minimum course offerings for each secondary school shall be a follows:

English	(5)
Mathematics	(5)
Science	(5)
Social Studies	(5) to include Government and US History
Foreign Language	(3)
Electives	(4)

It shall not be required that each of the units in the overall curriculum must be offered in each academic year, but it shall be required that all units included in the offering be available to a student during the high school career; i.e. a given unit may be offered in alternate years. Credits granted by one accredited VISA school shall be freely transferable to any other accredited VISA school or from other schools who are members of a recognized accrediting agency.

The summer school program, if offered, shall be administered by the school and shall be equal to that offered during the regular school term.

School sponsored extra-curricular activities shall be under the direct supervision of the staff and should contribute to the educational objectives of the school.

VI. VISA ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

The Virginia Independent Schools Association does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic, national, or religious origin.

Article I

The name of the Association is the Virginia Independent Schools Association, serving as a not-for-profit organization.

Article II

Mission and Philosophy

The purposes for which this Association are:

1. To promote educational excellence among member schools.
2. To encourage a commitment to high standards in the academic, student life, and all areas of member schools.
3. To establish and maintain a respected independent school accreditation system for member schools.
4. To promote a spirit of cooperation among member schools, other independent schools, public schools, and Virginia Council for Private Education (VCPE).
5. To promote any and all things necessary and incidental thereto for the maintenance of superior educational opportunities among member schools.
6. To comply with VCPE constitutional by-laws.

Article III

Duration

The period for the duration of the Association is unlimited.

Article IV

Board of Directors

The affairs and business of the Association shall be conducted by a Board of Directors. Each accredited school as prescribed by the By-Laws of the Association shall be entitled to have one member on said Board of Directors.

Article V
Executive Committee

The Board of Directors may, by resolution passed by a majority of the whole board, in its discretion, designate not less than five nor more than seven of its number to constitute an executive committee which shall have and exercise the power of the Board of Directors in the management of the business and affairs of the Association during the intervals between Board meetings.

Article VI
Participation

Participation in the various projects, services, and activities of VISA by the member schools shall be entirely voluntary with the exception of mandatory dues as provided in Article VIII of the By-Laws of the Association. All member schools must have a non-discriminatory student admissions policy.

BY-LAWS OF VIRGINIA INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
ASSOCIATION

Article I
Offices

The Association may maintain an office or offices within the Commonwealth of Virginia at the sole discretion of the Board of Directors of the Association.

Article II
Member and Accredited School

The term “member school” as defined in these By-Laws and in the Articles of Association of this Association is defined as follows: A “member school”, being in existence for three years, shall include any non-profit organization in the Commonwealth of Virginia created for the purpose of establishing and operating independent elementary and/or secondary schools which the organization has applied for and been accepted for membership in this Association by a majority vote of a quorum of the Directors or of the Executive Committee. The application forms for membership are available from VISA and must be accompanied by a non-refundable fee of three hundred dollars (\$300.00) when filed. To be accredited and a voting member, a school must undergo a self-study, a school evaluation visit, and

upon the recommendation of the VISA membership committee, be approved by a majority vote of a quorum of the Directors.

Article III Board of Directors

Section 1. General Powers.

The business and affairs of the Association shall be managed by its Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may appoint such general, standing, or special committees as it deems necessary and proper at any time in its sole discretion.

Section 2. Number and Tenure.

Each accredited school of the Association shall select one representative to represent said member school on the Board of Directors. Each director shall serve at the pleasure of the respective school and each school shall give the Association the name and address of its director. An accredited school shall be entitled to send an alternate representative to regular and special meetings of the Board of Directors with the written consent of the accredited school's president.

Article IV Meetings

Section 1. Regular Meetings.

The Board of Directors shall meet annually. This meeting should be held during the Fall each year and shall be held after at least ten days notice by the President of the Association or his designate as to the time and place of said meeting.

Section 2. Special Meetings.

Special meetings of the Board of Directors, for any purpose or purposes, may be called by the President, a majority of the Executive Committee, or by request of one-third of the members of the Board of Directors. At least ten days notice shall be given of the time and place of said special meetings to all members of the Board of Directors and the purpose or purposes of such special meetings shall be so stated.

Section 3. Voting.

Each member of the Board of Directors shall be entitled to one vote on all matters brought before regular and special meetings of the Board of Directors.

Section 4. Quorum.

A majority of the members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum at regular and special meetings of the Board of Directors. A majority of the Executive Committee members shall constitute a quorum at Executive Committee meetings.

Section 5. Proxies.

The voting of proxies from all accredited schools by any member of the Board of Directors will not be allowed.

Section 6. Visitors.

Members of the Board of Directors may bring guests or visitors to regular and special meetings of the Board of Directors but said guests or visitors shall have no voting rights.

Article V Officers

Section 1. Number.

The officers of the Association shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, each of whom shall be elected by the Board of Directors. Such other officers as may be deemed necessary may be elected or appointed by the Board of Directors. The offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be vested in the same person.

Section 2. Election and Term of Office.

The officers of the Association shall be elected annually by the Board of Directors at its Fall meeting. All officers may succeed themselves.

Section 3. Removal.

Any officer or agent of the Association may be removed by a majority vote of all members of the Board of Directors, and notice of such intended action must be contained in the notice if it is a regular meeting of the Board of Directors.

Section 4. Vacancies.

A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or otherwise, may be filled by the Board of Directors for the unexpired portion of the term.

Section 5. President.

The President shall be the principal executive officer of the Association; and, subject to the control of the Board of Directors, shall in general supervise and direct the affairs of the Association. He shall when present, preside at all regular or special meetings

Section 6. Vice-President.

In the absence of the President, the Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President, and when so acting, shall have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the President. Further, he shall perform such other duties as from time to time may be prescribed by the Board of Directors, including, but not limited to, serving on the Executive Committee.

Section 7. Secretary.

The Secretary shall (a) keep the minutes of the proceedings of all meetings, (b) see that all notices are given in accordance with the provisions of these By-Laws, (c) be custodian of the records of the Association and (d) in general perform all duties as from time may be assigned to him by President or by the Board of Directors.

Section 8. Treasurer.

The Treasurer shall (a) have charge and custody of and be responsible for all funds, monies, and securities of the Association, (b) receive and give receipts for monies due and payable to the Association and deposit all such monies in the name of the Association in such banks or depositories as shall be selected by the Board of Directors, (c) be at all time bonded with adequate surety or sureties in an amount in excess of the funds, monies and securities under his control, and (d) in general perform all of the duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the President or by the Board of Directors.

Article VI Executive Secretary

The Board of Directors may select an Executive Secretary on a part or full-time basis. This will be accomplished by appointing a committee to nominate an executive director. The Board of Directors shall prescribe the duties and responsibilities of said Executive Secretary and shall fix compensation for said Executive Secretary.

Article VII Dues

Section 1.

Each accredited school shall pay the Virginia Independent Schools Association annual dues in an amount of two dollars (\$2.00) per child enrolled in each member school as of September 15th of each year; however, there will be a maximum annual charge of seven hundred dollars (\$700.00) per member school. These annual dues must be paid in equal installments not less frequently than semi-annually and said dues are due payable on or before the 30th day of September and March of each year. Dues are subject to change as determined by the VISA Board of Directors.

Article VIII Amendments

Section 1.

These By-Laws and Standards may be altered, amended or repealed and new By-Laws or Standards may be adopted by a majority of a quorum of the Board of Directors at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors. Provided, however, notice of such intended action must be contained in the notice if it is a regular meeting of the Board of Directors.

Adopted February 2005

Section 2. Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the association, and after all its liabilities and obligations have been paid, satisfied and discharged or adequate provisions made thereof, all of the association's remaining assets shall be distributed to one or more member organizations that are organized and operated exclusively for educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Adopted January 2008

Section 3. Conflict of Interest

No part of the net earnings of the association shall inure to the benefit of the Executive Secretary or Board of Directors or to any person having a personal or private interest in the activities of the Association, except that the Association may pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and make payments or distributions in furtherance of the purposes.

Adopted January 2008

Section 4. Standard and Accreditation Review

These standards and the accreditation process are reviewed every five years by a committee appointed by representatives from each member school. The committee must provide rationale for the suggested changes to the Board of Directors, who will adopt the changes by a majority of a quorum vote.

Adopted November 2010

STUDENT OPINION SURVEY

Please circle a number to respond to each statement:

1-Excellent

2-Good

3-Fair

4-Needs Improvement

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1. Teachers care whether students learn in class. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 2. Teachers explain assignments clearly. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 3. Students can relate most classes to real life. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 4. Students have a variety of activities from which to choose. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 5. Students have access to additional resources, beyond textbooks, to help them with their school work. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 6. Discipline policies are fair. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 7. I look forward to coming to school. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 8. Counselors are available to help with both class selection and personal problems. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 9. The education that I receive is of high quality. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 10. Students are respectful towards each other | 1 2 3 4 |
| 11. I am satisfied with availability of technology at our school. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 12. Teachers motivate students to do their best. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 13. The facilities at my school are adequate to promote learning and support instruction. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 14. "School spirit" is very good. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 15. I can see the administrator the same day I need to. | 1 2 3 4 |

PARENT OPINION SURVEY

Please circle a number to respond to each statement:

- 1- Excellent**
- 2- Good**
- 3- Fair**
- 4- Needs Improvement**

1. Parents are informed of the school policies. 1 2 3 4
2. Reports concerning my son's or daughter's progress (report cards, interims) clearly inform me of my child's progress. 1 2 3 4
3. Teachers regularly communicate with parents of their students regarding student progress. 1 2 3 4
4. Students are being prepared to continue their education at the college level. 1 2 3 4
5. Parents are welcome at the school. 1 2 3 4
6. The school provides students and teachers with a safe and orderly environment for learning. 1 2 3 4
7. The school's grading policies and practices are administered fairly. 1 2 3 4
8. Homework assignments promote learning. 1 2 3 4
9. The instruction my child is receiving in the following academic areas is:

English	1 2 3 4	Foreign Language	1 2 3 4
Mathematics	1 2 3 4	Social Studies	1 2 3 4
Science	1 2 3 4	Physical Education	1 2 3 4
10. Students have a variety of activities in which to become involved. 1 2 3 4
11. Are you satisfied with the education your child is receiving? 1 2 3 4

TEACHER OPINION SURVEY

Please circle a number to respond to each statement:

1- Excellent

2- Good

3- Fair

4- Needs Improvement

1. The school is preparing students to deal with problems and issues they will face in the future. 1 2 3 4
2. Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and learning activities to help students achieve success. 1 2 3 4
3. Students are given a sufficient amount of homework to help succeed in their studies. 1 2 3 4
4. Facilities are adequate to promote learning and support. 1 2 3 4
5. Teachers regularly communicate with parents. 1 2 3 4
6. The administration of our school is fair and open with teachers. 1 2 3 4
7. If I have a discipline problem, the administration gives me the support I need. 1 2 3 4
8. Discipline policies provide a safe environment for learning and and student success. 1 2 3 4
9. Teaching supplies and equipment are adequate. 1 2 3 4
10. Discipline is very consistent among teachers. 1 2 3 4
11. Teachers are involved in making school policy. 1 2 3 4
12. Parents take an active role in their child's education. 1 2 3 4
13. Teacher morale is high. 1 2 3 4

VIII. VISA STANDARDS OF MEMBERSHIP REPORT FORM

SCHOOL EVALUATED: _____

VISITATION DATES: _____

EVALUATION MANUAL USED: _____

MEMBERS OF VISITING COMMITTEE:

NAME	SCHOOL
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

All VISA schools are subject to the following Standards of Accreditation. The self-study lends support to the standards and the school submits sufficient evidence to indicate that standards are met. Should a standard not be met, the school must submit acceptable evidence that the standard does not apply or that the deficiency does not affect the quality of the program. The Visiting Committee will record a vote on each standard and the vote shall be submitted along with narrative report of the committee. The committee should use the **VISA STANDARDS FOR MEMBERSHIP VOTE SHEET** to record their vote on each standard. The Visiting Committee Chair should complete and submit the **VISA VISITING COMMITTEE CHAIR CHECKLIST** along with the vote sheet.

VISA VISITING COMMITTEE CHAIR CHECKLIST

The following checklist should be used initially by the VISA Visiting Committee Chair to insure proper information and procedures are shared with the school to be evaluated. Subsequently, the checklist should be utilized by the Head of the school as feedback to VISA regarding the quality of the Visiting Chair's work (the Head should indicate "good", "fair", or "poor" in the blanks provided, and mail the checklist to VISA).

A. INITIAL VISIT TO THE SCHOOL:

The chair of the Visiting Committee will:

- _____ 1. Tour the school's facilities to familiarize self with the areas of the school.
- _____ 2. Meet the Head and Chair of Self-Study Committee to discuss:
 - _____ a. Self-Study Manual questions
 - _____ b. Selection of Visiting Committee members
 - _____ c. VISA Self-Study expectations:
 1. Poll of constituents
 2. Data collections
 3. Long-range plan
 4. Articulation of current statement of school philosophy
 5. Written curriculum
 6. Provisions for professional development
- _____ 3. Discuss arrangements for the Visiting Committee's visitation (dates, accommodations, clerical assistance, notification of Visiting Committee Members, etc.).

B. VISA VISITING COMMITTEE VISIT TO THE SCHOOL:

The Chair of the Visiting Committee will:

- _____ 1. Meet with the Visiting Committee members to charge the group with its overall responsibility; to assess the degree to which the school meets VISA Standards for Membership and meets its own stated philosophy and objectives.

- _____ 2. Assign areas of evaluation to each Visiting Committee member, as well as one or more areas of instructional program.
- _____ 3. Set the daily schedule for the visitation.
- _____ 4. Oversee the writing and editing of each section of the Visiting Committee Report. Each section includes reference to standards involved, overview introductory paragraph, recognition of strengths, recommendations for addressing weaknesses, and typed signatures of committee members preparing the report.
- _____ 5. Write the cover letter, Visiting Committee listing, table of contents, introduction, and conclusion of the Visiting Committee Report.
- _____ 6. Conduct a confidential discussion with the head of the school.
- _____ 7. Oversee arrangements for Visiting Committee members' reimbursement.
- _____ 8. Oversee arrangements for the school to publish and disseminate the Visiting Committee's Final Report; ensuring that the copies of the report are sent to members of the VISA Membership Committee.
- _____ 9. Conduct and record session of Visiting Committee vote on the VISA Standards Report Form and mails original to Visa Executive Director and copies of it to the Director of Membership.
- _____ 10. Forward to VISA Membership Committee any comments on the VISA process, communications, performance of Visiting Committee members, etc., as a means of feedback to evaluate, strengthen, and improve the VISA program.

The Head of the school is encouraged to make additional comments on strengths and weaknesses of Visiting Procedures, on Visiting Committee members, etc.

VISA REQUEST FOR EVALUATION

TO: Benjamin Vaughan, Executive Secretary
Virginia Independent School Association
P. O. Box 105
Isle of Wight, VA 23397

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 757-357-3866
FAX NUMBER: 757-357-6886

FROM: _____ Head of School
_____ Name of School
_____ Address of School
_____ Telephone Number

_____ plans to conduct its own Self-Study using
(Name of School)
approved criteria during the _____ school session. Evaluative Criteria to be
(Year)
used is:

_____ VISA
_____ SACS
_____ SAIS
_____ Other

_____ respectfully requests an evaluation by a
(Name of School)
VISA Visiting Committee during the _____ school session. We have reviewed the
(Year)
VISA Manual for School Evaluation and agree to the assigned responsibilities for our
school in preparation for and during the Visiting Committee's evaluation. In addition to
the VISA evaluation, we request a simultaneous evaluation by _____.

We understand that the school program should be conducted in its usual manner during
the evaluation process. We also understand that our school is responsible for normal
expenses incurred by the Visiting Committee and publication of required reports.

_____ Date _____ Chairman of the Board

_____ Date _____ Head of the School

VISA STANDARDS FOR MEMBERSHIP VOTE SHEET

I. THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY

1. The school has admission policies one of which must include a statement that qualified students are admitted without regard to race, color, ethnic background, or national origin.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

2. Written information is made available to students/parents pertaining to policies, obligations, and financial responsibilities prior to enrollment.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

3. The school has been in existence for at least three years and has a program spanning at least three successive grades beginning with Kindergarten.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

II. PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

4. The school has a clear statement setting forth its educational philosophy and aims.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

5. The school periodically reviews its philosophy and objectives.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

6. The school community is informed of the school's philosophy and objectives.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

7. The school is a legal entity and is tax exempt and not organized for profit.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

III. INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

8. The school's educational program provides for a balanced program of instruction developed from its stated philosophy and objectives and in keeping with the abilities, interests, and educational needs of its students.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

9. The school has a written curriculum guide describing its course of study and educational objectives at each level and in each area.
- ___ Fully Met ___ Marginally Met ___ Not Met ___ NA
10. The school year shall include a minimum 180 days, or the equivalent thereof, and the school day shall include a minimum of six clock hours.
- ___ Fully Met ___ Marginally Met ___ Not Met ___ NA
11. The standard unit of credit for graduation shall be based on a minimum of 130 clock hours or the equivalent thereof of instruction.
- ___ Fully Met ___ Marginally Met ___ Not Met ___ NA
12. Teachers of academic subjects have no more than 125 students enrolled in their classes.
- ___ Fully Met ___ Marginally Met ___ Not Met ___ NA
13. The school provides the minimum course offerings based on established VISA requirements.
- ___ Fully Met ___ Marginally Met ___ Not Met ___ NA
14. The summer school program, if offered, is equal in quality to that offered during the regular school term.
- ___ Fully Met ___ Marginally Met ___ Not Met ___ NA
15. The school clearly defines minimum requirements for graduation.
- ___ Fully Met ___ Marginally Met ___ Not Met ___ NA

IV. ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTITUTION

A. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

16. The institution is an independent school, is a legal entity organized not-for-profit, and is tax exempt.
- ___ Fully Met ___ Marginally Met ___ Not Met ___ NA

17. The school has a governing body which functions under a set of written by-laws which guide the development of school policy.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

18. The governing body has a system for the orientation and education of members newly appointed to the body regarding their role and responsibilities.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

19. The governing body is responsible for establishing an annual budget and for maintaining the fiscal stability of the school.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

20. The governing body is responsible for employing, evaluating and supporting the designated individuals whose chief responsibility is the administration and supervision of the school.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

21. The governing body develops and regularly reviews the school's statement of philosophy.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

22. The governing body is responsible for the periodic review of the school's policies, issues, and needs.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

23. The membership of the governing body is organized to be independent of any special interest group and to be representative of the school's over-all constituency.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

B. FINANCIAL

24. The financial resources are adequate to sustain the school programs in a manner consistent with the philosophies and objectives of the school.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

25. The school uses appropriate procedures for managing financial resources and maintains records of receipts and disbursements of funds.
- ___ Fully Met ___ Marginally Met ___ Not Met ___ NA
26. The financial records of the school are examined annually by a licensed professional accountant and a full opinion audit is required at least once every five years. Any applying school which has not had a full opinion audit within four years of the start of the self-study, must have one completed during the self-study year.
- ___ Fully Met ___ Marginally Met ___ Not Met ___ NA

V. SCHOOL PERSONNEL

27. The teaching faculty and administrative staff is sufficient in number to carry out the program of the school and provide for the needs of the school; service personnel is adequate to sustain support programs of the school. The school has an employment process that demonstrates that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic background, or national origin as provided by law.
- ___ Fully Met ___ Marginally Met ___ Not Met ___ NA
28. As basic preparation, members of the professional staff should possess either a teaching license, a bachelor's degree or give satisfactory evidence of its equivalent in training or experience. Member schools are encouraged to require a teacher to hold a valid Virginia State Collegiate Professional License. Professional staff are required to pursue continuing education course-work or professional development.
- ___ Fully Met ___ Marginally Met ___ Not Met ___ NA
29. The school has a functioning program for evaluation of staff performance and for further professional development of the staff.
- ___ Fully Met ___ Marginally Met ___ Not Met ___ NA
30. The administrative staff is responsible for instructional leadership and effective school management that implements the school program policies established by the governing body.
- ___ Fully Met ___ Marginally Met ___ Not Met ___ NA
31. Provision is made for the effective involvement of faculty, students, parents, and alumni in the development of the total school program.
- ___ Fully Met ___ Marginally Met ___ Not Met ___ NA

32. The school maintains and safeguards complete and accurate records for staff, students, and graduates.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

VI. AUXILIARY SERVICES

A. LEARNING MEDIA SERVICES

33. The library-learning collection is organized, supplied, and staffed as to provide for the program of the school and the needs of the students and professional staff.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

34. The individual in charge of learning media services possesses either a teaching license or a bachelor's degree (or gives satisfactory evidence of its equivalent in training or experience).

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

35. Professional learning media center staff are qualified by training and experience in the area of library science and/or media services.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

36. The school shall provide access to a book collection or the equivalent through electronic/technological resources.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

B. GUIDANCE SERVICES

37. A well-defined guidance program is in operation at the school.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

38. The counseling and advisory program of the school meets the needs of the students enrolled in terms of the school program and the stated purposes and objectives. The school has developed policies and procedures for the prevention and mitigation of bullying.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

39. Professional staff members are qualified by training and experience in guidance and counseling.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

40. Student records are complete, accurate, and safeguarded. In the event of a school closing student records will be transferred to the nearest VISA school.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

C. FOOD, HEALTH, AND TRANSPORTATION

41. The school has a written emergency management and disaster plan that ensures the safety and care of students and staff in the event of severe weather or natural or man-made disasters and has trained staff in such measures.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

42. The school health facilities, vehicles, and food services meet state and local health, safety, and fire regulations.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

43. Procedures are adequate to meet health care needs of the student body. The school has developed policies and procedures for Medication Administration Training and management of concussions.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

44. Service personnel are adequate to sustain the support programs in a manner consistent with the purposes and objectives of the school.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

VII. STUDENT ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

45. School sponsored extracurricular activities are under the direct supervision of the staff.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

46. The student activities program contributes to the educational objectives of the school.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

VIII. SCHOOL PLANT AND FACILITIES

47. All school buildings provide ample space and appointments to serve their purpose.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

48. The school has sufficient physical facilities and equipment to support the programs of the school and such facilities meet applicable state and local health, safety, and fire regulations.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

49. The school provides grounds that are sufficient to accommodate the necessary outdoor activities of the student body other than athletic competition and such grounds are maintained in a safe and attractive manner.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

IX. PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

50. Preschool or daycare programs are designed to meet the developmental, emotional, and intellectual needs of their student while providing a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment for ages 2 thru 5.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

51. Preschool or daycare programs subject to licensure must be licensed through the Department of Social Services of the State of Virginia.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

52. Preschool or daycare programs meet or exceed all minimum requirements for licensure through the Department of Social Services of the State of Virginia.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

X. EVALUATION PROCESS

53. The school must have a continuous plan for school improvement. This Strategic Plan will result in logical, realistic and sequential efforts to improve the overall school program.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

54. Evaluation of a school must be undertaken every five years.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA

55. Schools seeking accreditation or dual accreditation must meet each of the VISA membership standards.

Fully Met Marginally Met Not Met NA